

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 1-7 and 11 and amend claims 8, 12, 14 and 17 as follows.

Please add new claims 21 - 77 as follows.

1-7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

a cyclonic airflow chamber that facilitates the separation of contaminants from a suction airstream, said airflow chamber including a chamber inlet and a an axial chamber outlet, said chamber inlet being fluidically connected with at least one of a suction nozzle and an above-the-floor cleaning tool;

an exhaust filter housing including ~~a suction duct and an exhaust plenum, said suction duct communicating with said chamber outlet;~~

~~a suction source housing including an open end communicating with said exhaust plenum and a closed end; and~~

~~a suction source positioned within said suction source housing to define an annular exhaust flow passageway surrounding said suction source from said housing closed end to said housing open end, said suction source including a suction inlet communicating with said a suction duct and an exhaust outlet communicating with said exhaust filter housing closed end and;~~

a diverter located at said chamber inlet, wherein said diverter directs said suction airstream to flow tangentially within said chamber.

9. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 8, further including a primary filter assembly mounted in said cyclonic airflow chamber upstream from said suction source for filtering contaminants from said suction airstream.

10. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 9, wherein said primary filter assembly includes a filter element with a polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) filter medium.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Currently Amended) The vacuum cleaner of claim ~~14~~ 8, wherein said diverter is associated with a lid that is removable from said chamber.

13. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 8, wherein said chamber inlet communicates with said suction nozzle, and a second chamber inlet spaced from said first-mentioned chamber inlet communicates with said above-the-floor cleaning tool.

14. (Currently Amended) The vacuum cleaner claim 8, further comprising an exhaust filter positioned within said exhaust filter housing, ~~said exhaust filter being positioned radially outward of said exhaust plenum whereby exhaust air passes radially outward through said exhaust filter from said exhaust plenum.~~

15. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 14, wherein said exhaust filter comprises a high efficiency particulate arrest (HEPA) filter medium.

16. (Currently Amended) The vacuum cleaner of claim 14, wherein the cyclonic airflow chamber, exhaust filter housing, and suction source housing are associated with a vacuum cleaner upper assembly, and the ~~suction source housing~~ vacuum cleaner upper assembly is pivotally secured to a nozzle base.

17. (Currently Amended) The vacuum cleaner of claim 16, wherein said chamber outlet, said suction duct, and said suction inlet are axially positioned ~~along~~ parallel to a central longitudinal axis of the upper assembly.

18. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 8, further including a bleed air port communicating with said suction duct.

19. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 8, wherein said cyclonic airflow chamber is defined by a dirt cup that retains debris separated from said suction airstream, said dirt cup being removable from the exhaust filter housing.

20. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 19, further including a primary filter assembly centrally mounted within said dirt cup, said cyclonic airflow chamber being defined between said dirt cup and said primary filter assembly.

21. (New) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

a base unit;  
a housing pivotally mounted on said base unit;  
a suction source mounted to one of said base unit and said housing;  
5 a dirt receptacle mounted to said housing, said dirt receptacle  
comprising a base wall, a side wall and an open upper end;  
a filter removably mounted in said dirt receptacle; and,  
a lid selectively covering said open upper end of said dirt receptacle,  
wherein said lid comprises a diverter wall to channel an airstream flowing into said  
10 dirt receptacle into a cyclonic flow.

22. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 21 further comprising a stem  
extending from said base wall of said dirt receptacle.

23. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 22 wherein said stem surrounds  
an opening extending through said base wall.

24. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 22 wherein said filter is mounted  
on said stem.

25. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 24 wherein said filter sealingly  
engages said stem.

26. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 25 wherein said filter comprises a  
filter ring engaging said stem.

27. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 21 wherein said filter comprises a  
pleated filter medium.

28. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 21 further comprising a frame for  
supporting said filter.

29. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 22 wherein said stem is of one  
piece with said dirt receptacle.

30. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 22 wherein said stem extends approximately parallel to said side wall of said dirt receptacle.

31 (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 22 further comprising a raised area located on said dirt receptacle base wall.

32. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 31 wherein said stem protrudes from said raised area.

33. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 21 wherein said filter is approximately cylindrical in shape.

34. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 33 wherein said filter comprises a thermoplastic material.

35. (New) A vacuum cleaner comprising:  
a nozzle base comprising a suction inlet;  
a housing pivotally mounted on said nozzle base;  
a suction source mounted to one of said nozzle base and said housing,  
5 said suction inlet communicating with said suction source;  
a dirt receptacle mounted to said housing, said dirt receptacle comprising a base wall, a side wall and an open upper end;  
a stem protruding from said base wall;  
a filter assembly, comprising a first filter, removably mounted on said  
10 stem; and,  
a lid selectively covering an open upper end of said dirt receptacle, wherein said lid comprises a diverter wall for directing airflow into said dirt receptacle.

36. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 further comprising a second filter, spaced from said first filter.

37. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 36 wherein at least one of said first and second filters comprises a high efficiency particulate arrest (HEPA) filter

material.

38. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said stem surrounds an opening extending through said base wall.

39. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said filter assembly sealingly engages said stem.

40. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 39 wherein said filter assembly comprises a filter ring engaging said stem.

41. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said filter assembly comprises a closed upper end.

42. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 41 wherein said upper end comprises a cap.

43. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said first filter comprises a pleated filter medium.

44. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said filter assembly further comprises a frame for supporting said first filter.

45. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said stem is of one piece with said dirt receptacle.

46. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said stem extends approximately parallel to said side wall of said dirt receptacle.

47. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 further comprising a raised area located on said dirt receptacle base wall.

48. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 47 wherein said stem protrudes from said raised area.

49. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 35 wherein said filter assembly is approximately cylindrical in shape.

50. (New) A vacuum cleaner comprising:  
a base unit, including a nozzle opening;  
a housing pivotally mounted on said base unit;  
a suction source mounted to one of said base unit and said housing

5 and communicating with said nozzle opening;

a dirt receptacle mounted to said housing, said dirt receptacle comprising a base wall, a side wall and an open upper end, said dirt receptacle comprising a filtration chamber;

a filter removably mounted in said filtration chamber;

10 a lid selectively covering said open upper end of said dirt receptacle;

an inlet to said filtration chamber, said inlet being located in said lid;

and,

an outlet from said filtration chamber, said outlet being located on said dirt receptacle base wall.

51. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 50 wherein said outlet of said filtration chamber comprises a stem protruding from said dirt receptacle base wall.

52. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 51 wherein said stem surrounds an opening extending through said base wall.

53. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 51 wherein said filter sealingly engages said stem.

54. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 53 wherein said filter comprises a filter ring engaging said stem.

55. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 51 wherein said stem is of one piece with said dirt receptacle.

56. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 51 wherein said stem extends approximately parallel to said side wall of said dirt receptacle.

57. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 51 further comprising a raised area located on said dirt receptacle base wall.

58. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 51 wherein said lid comprises a diverter wall to channel an airstream flowing into said filtration chamber into a cyclonic flow.

59. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 50 wherein said filter comprises a closed upper end.

60. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 59 wherein said upper end comprises a cap.

61. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 50 wherein said filter comprises a pleated filter medium.

62. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 50 further comprising a frame for supporting said filter.

63. (New) A vacuum cleaner comprising:  
a base unit, including a nozzle opening;  
a housing pivotally mounted on said base unit;  
a dirt receptacle mounted to said housing, said dirt receptacle  
5 comprising a base wall, a side wall and an open upper end, said dirt receptacle  
comprising a filtration chamber;  
a filter removably mounted in said filtration chamber;  
a suction source mounted to one of said base unit and said housing  
and communicating with said nozzle opening via said filtration chamber;  
10 a lid selectively covering said open upper end of said dirt receptacle;  
a tangential inlet to said filtration chamber, said inlet being located in  
said lid; and,

an axial outlet from said filtration chamber, said outlet being located on said dirt receptacle base wall.

64. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 63 wherein said outlet of said filtration chamber comprises a stem protruding from said dirt receptacle base wall.

65. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 64 wherein said stem surrounds an opening extending through said base wall.

66. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 65 wherein said filter sealingly engages said stem.

67. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 63 wherein said axial outlet from said filtration chamber communicates with an inlet of said suction source.

68. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 64 wherein said stem is of one piece with said dirt receptacle.

69. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 64 wherein said stem extends approximately parallel to said side wall of said dirt receptacle.

70. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 64 wherein said stem extends approximately parallel to said side wall of said dirt receptacle.

71. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 64 further comprising a raised area located on said dirt receptacle base wall.

72. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 71 wherein said stem is positioned on said raised area.

73. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 63 wherein said filter comprises a closed upper end.

74. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 73 wherein said upper end



comprises a cap.

75. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 63 wherein said filter comprises a pleated filter medium.

76. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 63 further comprising a frame for supporting said filter.

77. (New) The vacuum cleaner of claim 63 wherein said tangential inlet to said filtration chamber comprises a diverter wall located on said lid.